Colley, J.R.T. "Respiratory Symptoms in Children and Parental Smoking and Phlegm Production" British Medical Journal 2: 201-204, 1974.

SUMMARY: A study of respiratory symptoms in 2,426 school children aged 6-14 years was carried out in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, in 1971. The prevalence of cough in the children was associated with the parents' smoking habits; prevalence was lowest where both parents were non-smokers, highest where both parents smoked, and lay between these two levels where only one parent smoked. A close association was found between parents' and childrens' respiratory symptoms that was independent of parents' smoking habits. There was no suggestion that exposure to the cigarette smoke generated when parents smoked had any more than a small effect upon the child's respiratory symptoms. While the sharing of genetic susceptibility between parents and children is a factor, therefore, cross infection, particularly in the families where parents smoke, is an important element in the association.

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